



May 20, 2020

Dear SA Swimming Family,

After nine long weeks out of the water, we are finally getting close to a return. There's an awful lot at play here, so I ask your patience in reading closely my plan for getting us back up and going again.

Who Makes The Call To Reopen, and When and How?

Here's how it works: The City of Sanford owns and operates the pool. I serve as the Aquatics Director for the City, and as a coach for Seminole High School. While I make recommendations pertaining to the facility, the final decisions on issues related to the pool are made by the City Recreation Department. Some pools that are school-operated and owned, like Winter Park, Lake Brantley and Lake Howell, are at the mercy of their respective school boards.

The leadership at the City of Sanford—the Recreation Department (Director Lisa Jones and Superintendent Jerry Sullivan), Sanford's Mayor (Jeff Triplett), the Sanford City Manager (Norton Bonaparte), and the Sanford City Commission---have **all** been incredibly supportive of my proposals to reopen the pool. Most importantly, they have done it in a way that has kept our safety at the forefront, and these leaders truly deserve our thanks. If you ever want to help our program, please reach out to them with an email and tell them how much you appreciate their support of our kids.

OK, So, When Can We Get Back In the Water??

We are going to work in a phased-in approach, a "soft reopen", beginning June 1 with only our Senior Group for the first two weeks. But, before I elaborate, I need to stress something to all of you:

We have already missed over two months of training. But far more importantly, the death count in our country is over 90,000 people lost, as of this writing, and we have an economy that is absolutely reeling.

As we begin to re-open parts of the country, any sudden infection spikes, or a resurgence in people getting sick, will likely cause us to have even stricter quarantining. This absolutely cannot happen, and **we need to do our part at the pool** to show the City and school that we are able to act responsibly in doing our part to continue slowing the spread of this disease.

What has been proven to work, worldwide, is very simple:

- Social distancing slows the spread.
- Wearing masks in public slows the spread.
- Accurate testing, isolating positive cases, and doing contact tracing, slows the spread.

Make absolutely no mistake about where I stand on this: All I want is for your family to stay safe. And I'm doing everything in my power to get you back in the water, safely. But, I need your help if we are going to **STAY** in the water.

THIS IS OUR PLAN TO REOPEN SEMINOLE AQUATICS:

The City has approved a plan that I put out that goes like this:

June 1-12: Senior Group resumes with just two groups of up to 20 swimmers, for an hour and 15 minutes each, mornings only, Monday through Friday. Groups will be spread out, one swimmer per lane, with strict social distancing and bathroom policies (see attached). SRs **MUST** select their time by signing up online for the SR Group, and selecting either 6:30 am or 8 am ([HERE](#) is the link to sign up, it's at the end of this email as well). Finally, SRs, you cannot switch times for these two weeks.

The City will view this as a critical "trial period" for the pool, and we need to be spot-on in terms of policies regarding arrival and departure, distancing, and our staff controlling and sanitizing the facility.

IF things go well during this time, AND if we can get permission to expand to either two or three swimmers per lane on June 15, then we will have our Senior Group practice on weekdays from 6:30 am until 9:30 am, and Saturdays from 9-10:30 am for the remainder of the summer. Keep your fingers crossed.

June 15-July 3: Again, IF things go well from June 1-12 with the Senior Group, particularly in terms of enforcing the social distancing, then we will be given the green light to add AG2, AG3, AG4, and AG5 beginning on June 15. Due to the required distancing, the schedule will be different than our normal practice schedule:

9:45 am-10:30 am: AG2 & AG3 (Monday thru Thursday)- limited to 20 swimmers, one per lane

10:45 am-11:30 am: AG2 & AG3 (Monday thru Thursday)- limited to 20 swimmers, one per lane

5 pm- 5:45 pm: AG4 & AG5 (Monday thru Friday)- limited to 18 swimmers, one per lane

6 pm- 6:45 pm: AG4 & AG5 (Monday thru Friday)- limited to 18 swimmers, one per lane

AG2 & AG3 and AG4 & AG5, please note: The time that you train will be based on which slot that you select; there will be up to 18 lanes at each time, with swimmers limited to one person per lane, and slots will be filled online, first-come, first-served. These group slots will be COMBINED groups, with AG2 and AG3 combining in the morning slots, and AG4 and AG5 combining in the evening slots. This gives more kids a chance to swim, without having someone get "bumped" from a group due to it being filled.

SATURDAYS: For June 20 and June 27, Saturday practice time will be from 9 am until 10:30 am, and will be limited to SR ONLY. We *may* be able to expand this to include AG4 and AG5 with the SRs in July. Please stay tuned on this.

JULY 6-AUGUST 1: If things go well in June, with us doing our parts as swimmers, parents, coaches, and as a lifeguard staff, then we can hopefully expand in July, ideally going two or three people per lane. But, this is nearly seven weeks away, and there is an awful lot that can happen over seven weeks, as we have seen. But, AG2 and AG3 will have to stay in the mornings for all of June and July, and then hopefully return to a "normal" evening schedule during the school year.

Age Group One and Summer Stingrays: Sadly, due to the limits on social distancing and pool availability, we don't have the ability to do these groups, at this time. All that I can tell you is that we are planning to resume our AG1 Group in August. And, we are planning to resume our Summer

Stingrays program next summer, hopefully with the Coronavirus at that point being nothing more than a very bad memory.

Club Water Polo: Coach Ryan Ackerson is the new Head Coach for Seminole High School Water Polo, and he will be coaching the high school level club water polo players. Due to space limits, it has to be high school only this summer. Right now, the plan is to cap it at 28 players, with social distancing in effect at all times. This program will begin June 15, with the following schedule:

7 pm until 8:45 pm, Monday and Wednesday evenings

10 am until 12 noon, Friday mornings

11 am until 1 pm, Saturdays

So, that's it, in a nutshell. Obviously, there will be people that are unhappy with this schedule. Am I *completely* happy with it? Well, no. I always want more. Am I thankful for it? You're darn right I am.

I know of other similar programs that are having to run their SENIOR groups in 45-minute increments, with only 11 swimmers allowed at a time, due to their City's restrictions. Our good friends at Patriot, Winter Park, and Silver Hawk Aquatics aren't allowed into their school-controlled pools at all, with no tentative date even set for consideration of a reopening. So, I'm thankful that we're even entertaining the idea of being back in the water on June 1, even on a limited basis. As the old saying goes, half a loaf of bread is better than no loaf.

HERE'S HOW TO SIGN UP TO SWIM IN JUNE:

SR Group: Registration opens JUST for the SR Swimmers on May 25 at midnight. Again, this is on a first-come, first-served basis to claim your time slot for the first two weeks (either 6:30 am or 8:00 am).

AG1, AG2, AG3, AG4, AG5 and Water Polo: Registration opens on our website at midnight on June 10.

Click [HERE](#) for the link to the registration! **YOU CANNOT COME TO PRACTICE UNTIL YOU SIGN UP.**

Thanks for your incredible patience through this ordeal. I know that it hasn't been easy for anyone. And thanks for sticking with us. Finally, thanks in advance for following the guidelines necessary to keep us open. Again, we can only do this by working together.

I look forward to seeing everyone again, very soon.

Tony Ackerson

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